



File Code: 3420

Date: July 27, 2006

Area Director
USDI-Bureau of Indian Affairs
P.O. Box 10
Phoenix, AZ 85001

Dear Area Director:

Mary Lou Fairweather, Plant Pathologist with our staff, recently met with Jere McLemore, Presale Supervisory Forester, Fort Apache Agency, BIA, to evaluate the proposed FY2007 Turkey Creek West Dwarf Mistletoe Management Projects 1&2. The proposals are being submitted to cover costs associated with precommercial thinning and slash treatment of dwarf mistletoe infected trees.

These projects are located within the Turkey Creek Timber Management Unit on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. There are 11 stands, comprising 786 acres, with site elevations ranging from 6300 to 7600 feet and of variable aspects. Forest vegetation in the selected sites is dominated by uneven-aged ponderosa pine with varying levels of gambel oak, white pine, and juniper. A few sites also have a cottonwood component. A summary of stand exam survey data is presented in Table 1. This data was collected before the recent commercial timber harvest, which targeted the removal of all visibly infected overstory trees. Most stands have dwarf mistletoe infection levels in the light to moderate range, but sites 0206 and 1114 are more heavily infected, especially on rocky ridge tops. Stocking in the understory appeared to be much greater than is reported in the table for stands 0206, 0407, and 0410.

Table 1. Stand exam data summary table for sites proposed for dwarf mistletoe suppression treatment.

Site	Acres	TPA 2-10"	DMR <10"
0206	129	88	2.33
0401	59	310	0.25
0407	66	98	0.52
0410	53	56	0.67
1006	116	69	0.35
1007	118	166	0.30
1101	105	96	0.60
1114	31	307	1.52
1207	17	169	0.05
2707	37	119	0
2715	55	85	0.32



The primary objective of the Turkey Creek West project is to promote the health and longevity of residual trees by decreasing dwarf mistletoe infection levels and reducing competition. These stands were deemed suited to the “total control” strategy outlined in the Fort Apache Indian Reservation Forest Management Plan, 2005-2014, which allows areas to be sanitized by removing all visible dwarf mistletoe infection and providing improved growing conditions for healthy, uninfected trees. The proposed action is to cut all seedlings, saplings and pole sized trees with visible dwarf mistletoe infection on 786 acres. Uninfected trees would also be targeted in stands 0206, 0407, and 0410 to reduce competition. A general spacing guideline of 17 to 20 feet between residual trees is prescribed for an estimated leave stocking of 150 trees per acre. Lightly infected trees will be retained for stocking where openings greater than 2 acres would be created. An area of adequate stocking of seedlings (200 to 300 seedlings per acre) would not be considered an opening. Slash will be lopped and scattered or hand/machine piled and burned to reduce fire hazard. The Agency plans a followup exam in 5 years for stands 0206 and 1114, to survey for visible dwarf mistletoe infection in residual trees.

In addition to concurring with the proposed prescriptions, our office recommends that slash be generated between late summer and the end of December, if possible, in order to lessen the buildup of ips bark beetles. Slash piles should be placed in stand openings as much as possible and the largest diameter slash put on the outside of the pile to promote quick drying. Tepee style slash piles could have branches and small-diameter slash in the middle and the larger diameter material on the outside.

If you have any questions regarding this evaluation, please let us know. Mary Lou can be reached at (928) 556-2075 (mfairweather@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

/s/ John Anhold
JOHN ANHOLD
Arizona Zone Leader Forest Health

cc: Alicia DiValentino
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